



Good Neighbor Environmental Board

Tuesday, April 2, 2013

12pm - 4pm

Initial Meeting Summary

Follow-up tasks for Board members are highlighted in red in *bold italic*.

Item 1: **Welcome and Introductions**

Unfortunately, Mark Joyce, (OFACMO) and Acting Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the GNEB called in sick and was unable to participate in the meeting. Thanks to Cynthia Jones-Jackson, Acting Director of OFACMO, for stepping in and serving as our DFO for the meeting. Cynthia and Diane Austin, Chair of the GNEB, welcomed everyone. Each Board member and alternate on the call then introduced him or herself. Ann-Marie Gantner (OFACMO) and staff assistants in her office had prepared a few slides with photos of the members, and these were displayed during the introductions. *Members whose photos were not included were asked to email their photos to Ann-Marie.* One member asked that the slides be shared with all the members. *Ann-Marie will share the slides with the entire Board once she has photos from everyone.* Ann-Marie announced that John Maynard, Santa Cruz County Supervisor, had to step down from the Board because of local obligations he is now facing.

Item 2: **Overview of Agenda**

Diane reviewed the ground rules for participating in the call (how to indicate intent to speak), general principles of consensus (the GNEB operates by consensus whenever possible), and the agenda for the meeting. Ann-Marie Gantner (OFACMO) had emailed "Helpful Tips for Participation" and the "Agenda" in advance of the meeting.

Item 3: **Discussion of Meetings, Report Process and Timeline**

Cynthia provided an update on the situation in Washington, D.C., and particularly the effects of the sequester. The EPA's portion of the cuts is \$425 million and the effects range from furloughs for staff to extremely reduced travel budgets. There are no resources for travel at this time, so the Board will operate by videoconference and teleconference for the remainder of this year. Cynthia reiterated, though, that the work of the Board is extremely important and the OFACMO staff will do what it can to support the Board. She specifically asked returning members to help guide the new members in their participation on the Board. Cynthia noted that despite the delays in getting the Board appointed, the OFACMO staff, the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), which is the Board's direct contact in the Administration, and Diane had been working since late fall to move things forward. In December, in addition to receiving the GNEB's 15th report on behalf of President Barack Obama, Nancy Sutley, Chair of the CEQ, convened a teleconference/meeting of the Southwest Border Interagency Working Group and the GNEB to begin discussions of the topic for the 16th report. GNEB members were also asked to submit ideas for report

topics in writing. In February 2013, during the transition to the new Board, returning members participated in a call with Ann Acheson (CEQ) and the OFACMO staff to review and discuss the list of topics that had been received. Ann, the OFACMO staff, and Diane then participated in a number of calls as the list of topics was reduced to three and a proposed timeline for producing the report was developed. Diane noted that finalizing the timeline and selecting one of those three topics was the primary purpose of the current meeting.

Cynthia also followed up regarding the distribution of the 15th report to members of Congress. Due to budget cuts, there are limited funds for printing the report. The report has been placed online on the GNEB website, three copies were delivered to the Library of Congress, and members of the GNEB and the Southwest Border Interagency Working Group received copies. *Cynthia is working with CEQ to determine the process by which the report will be distributed to members of Congress this year and will inform the Board once a decision has been made.* She has also investigated the question of whether highlights from the report can be put on YouTube. The EPA has a YouTube channel and *Cynthia is finding out whether that can be used for this purpose.*

Diane presented the proposed timeline for completing the 16th report (Ann-Marie emailed the “At a Glance” timeline to the Board prior to the meeting) and noted that due to concerns about being able to complete a full report in six months this year we were proposing, and the CEQ approved, submission of an advice letter in 2013 and then the full 16th report in 2014. The Board decided to wait to approve the timeline until after discussion of the report topic.

Item 4: Discussion of the Report Topic

The Board began with three broad topics that emerged from the prior discussions: Waste Management, Healthy and Sustainable Communities, Ecological Restoration. In addition, CEQ requested that, whichever topic was suggested, the Board consider the following as well:

- Collaboration and communication
- Efficiencies
- How healthy environments (human/natural) and border security interact

Teresa Pohlman reminded the board that environmental justice was also a concern, so we added that to the list.

- Environmental justice

The Board then reviewed each topic in turn and provided pros and cons with regard to the Board selecting it as the topic for the 16th report. Board members also then identified any expertise they had or could access in relation to the topic (summary notes of that discussion is pasted at the end of this document). *The Board then selected Environmental Restoration as its topic.*

Item 5: Review of Timeline

The Board then returned to the discussion of the timeline and approved the proposed timeline. The next Board meeting will be by video/teleconference in June 2013. *In April and May, Board members will gather information about the report topic and identify important sources of information. Each Board member should begin creating a concise summary highlighting topics and information she or he believes should be included in the report. Please review the*

discussion of topics and coordinate with other Board members where possible to avoid duplication of effort. Diane will notify members in May where and when to submit those so they can be collated prior to the June meeting. *Board members should send reference documents and/or links to those to Ann-Marie to be distributed to the Board.* The EPA is currently putting a file sharing system, Share Point in place (to be completed in the next 3 to 6 months), and Cynthia will check to find out if the Board will be able to use that system to store documents. Board members suggested other options, but government employees are unable to use some systems, such as Dropbox.

2013:

April – Teleconference/Videoconference

- Select topic for 16th report and approve timeline **DONE!** ☺

June – Teleconference/Videoconference

- Review information on the topic, identify tasks and assign responsibilities, agree on information to be transmitted in October's advice letter to CEQ

August – Teleconference/Videoconference

- Finalize and approve advice letter to CEQ and get updates on other tasks

October/November - Teleconference/Videoconference

- Transmit advice letter to CEQ

Ann-Marie will set up a Doodle Poll to identify dates for the June and August meetings. Board members were asked to identify dates of other meetings in those months and came up with:

June 13-14, Arizona-Mexico Commission meetings

June 27-28 is Western Governors Association meeting.

Board members are asked to check their calendars and respond right away when Ann-Marie sends out the Doodle Poll so we can get this meeting scheduled and on everyone's calendar.

Item 6: **Public Comments**

Several members of the public signed up to speak during the public comment period. All were expressing concern about the demolition of the ASARCO smokestacks in El Paso that is scheduled for April 13th. They also sent comments in writing (Board members received these and some of the responses via email). Diane extended the meeting for 30 minutes to allow them to voice their concerns and get information and feedback from Board members. Thanks to those who were able to stay on after the allotted time to hear the concerns; several Board members agreed to follow up.

SUMMARY of GNEB Discussion of the Report Topics

1. Waste management:

Pros

- for food waste--composting, creating useful products from "waste"
- project tracking flow of solid/hazard wastes from Tijuana
- spent lead acid batteries, complement some of the work done by the CEC on Used batteries (Slabs)
- e-waste big problem (difference in mgmt on both sides of border)
- falls w/i historic work of GNEB, BECC and NADBank
- US/ Mexico defined waste differently (reference), educational aspect, potential for both one side of the border action and binational
- waste mgmt provides infrastructure
- sham recycling (concern)
- rapidly shrinking landfill resources
- good case in SD-Tijuana region, on Tijuana River Flood Plain
- potential for focus and specific recomment
- DHS Indian Health Service has about \$1.5 million documented in UDM waste sites in Arizona alone
- ties into community-level public health
- trash from binational watersheds not managed similarly across the region
- outreach opportunities that tangible at the residential and national level
- electronic hazard waste, more than just waste tires
- impacts water and air quality and refers to both solid and liquid
- could update progress since 13th GNEB report
- considerable HazWaste expertise among Region 9, DTSC & my Department

Cons

- largely constrained to practical recommendations on the US side
- do think the border area has bigger issues due to its geometry than waste issue
- UDM waste issues is an issue on tribal lands along the border
- tires discussed everywhere
- issue about discussion UDM waste w/ Mexico, touchy issue (?)
- Addressed in 13th GNEB report, enough time for significant changes? Has only been 3 years
- Border Scrap Tires Working Group and website created by EPA already
- require discussions with Mexico
- CEC is already addressing used battery issue
- slabs issue in interior Mexico, constraint about US side

Expertise:

- **Mike Vizzier:** In California I think we have considerable HazWaste expertise among Region 9, DTSC & my Department but I'm not certain of data. Even less certain of what we do not know.
- **Teresa Pohlman:** We have expertise in sustainability, environmental planning and compliance, etc.
- **Steve Niemeyer:** I've done a legislative report on transboundary movement of hazardous waste. I've also spent way too much time on scrap tires in the border region
- **David Henkel:** I have experience with waste management in colonias as it relates to environmental justice.
- **Cyrus Reed:** Cyrus Reed: I have a lot of background and experience on cross-border waste issues and others related to solid waste management
- **Keith Pezzoli:** Expertise on Waste Management: Our Superfund Research Center has expertise on the health impacts of exposure to renegade wastes, especially hazardous wastes

2. Healthy and Sustainable Communities

Pros

- Integrating health concerns with the built environment (housing, infrastructure, land use, etc) is crucial, hot topic w/ opportunities to advance more integrated and systems-oriented approaches to problem def and solutions
- Evaluation of ecological services provided to healthy human communities could be one angle (include contributions from protected areas as well as regulatory programs)
- opportunity to develop specific topics on sustainable development, including economic and social
- recent cumulative impacts study, air admissions, hazardous waste, would like to see US EPA and CDC (Center for Disease Control) to work closer with these issues
- issues with Colorado river in EPA and canal project mentioned
- many definitions, discuss standard along border, provides opportunities to bring these topics to gov
- U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission probably has expertise or would provide opportunity to collaborate.
- expertise to dial in on regional security and re-think homeland security, asset based approach
- improving community resiliency is also a theme in disaster recovery
- We have shared water basins, airsheds too w/ Mexico
- Could bring focus on SW Border and happenings

Cons

- Past GNEB report on Children's Env Health (7th), did not get reponse back from gov
- Feb 2013 EPA issued a report, make sure not to be redundant on GNEB report
- difficult to talk about sus in border region w/o discussing water supply and long term sustainability

- seeing these issues through small lens
- many issues to discuss about sus comm, need to narrow to few topics
- It may be difficult to address healthy and sustainable communities without addressing broad socioeconomic variables
- too much for us to come up with a specific recommendation on it given it could deal with water, energy, buildings, waste management, etc
- too big to tackle sustainability and health
- may be in conflict with existing reports (also already a federal gov't Partnership for Sustainable Communities, so would likely be duplicative)
- general a great goal, but too broad to be tackled by this group. As others have said, water, waste, ecological restoration and almost any other topic this Board could choose to discuss would fall under this category.

Expertise:

- **Ivonne Santiago:** I can contribute on the part of sustainable construction
- **Dave Anderson** here again. I am a Planning Commissioner and working with the local HUD Sustainable Places grant folks as well
- **Julie Grogan-Brown:** USDA has considerable expertise on healthy and sustainable communities regarding economic development, natural resources management/restoration, food and nutrition, and other areas
- **Keith Pezzoli:** Wrote a book on Human Settlements and Planning for Ecological Sustainability (focused on Mexico). Now working on a book titled, Rooted Community: Cultivating Healthy Human Settlements and Bioregional Resilience.
- **Steve Niemeyer:** I have expertise in many areas of this broad topic
- **Mike Vizzier:** Our Health Human Services Agency has expertise and I think they would be excited to contribute. I suspect that the focus will be on air, water and disease transmission. There is an EJ link.
- **Teresa Pohlman 2:** Many of my staff and I have expertise in sustainability, and also component expertise focused on the SW border.
- **Greg Eckert:** FORGOT - I used to work in hazmat so have some expertise in assessment and remediation

Comments:

- **Enrique Manzanilla:** "narrow" topic in two ways: Domestic - how do we apply principles of HUD/Dot/EPA partnership to US cities along the border. Resource integration, etc. #2 Binational - how do this for sister city pairs.

3. Ecological Restoration

Pros

- Several projects happening now along border, opportunity for similar projects (from the Big Bend area of Texas to some groundbreaking binational efforts in the Colorado River boundary segment and delta, to the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico and West Texas, to the Tijuana River Valley, among others)

- Understand barriers of ecosystem recovery, invasive species/ env quality/ NRCS ranch, farm mgmt
- Often tied to participatory efforts, i.e. cleaning up local watershed, ecological services to be restored
- Focus should be on adaptation to climate change--espec more variable rainfall projected for area, plus less overall, plus more intense flooding: how can ecol restore make human communities more sustainable
- Very positive and great to have positive agenda, to help and improve (participatory good!)
- Env has been degraded have years and opportunity to remind folks of this change, realize our losses (Env services, Recreation, etc from climate change)
- (Resource) UTEP has some great resources dealing with ecological restoration in the face of climate changes
- Can be used as general access to outdoors and nature, more along lines of sus comm
- Engages the border communities at all levels, from school children, to service projects, to public-private partnerships, to joint operating agreements between agencies.
- topic is closely related to sustainability
- restoration topic of high significance these days is connectivity which includes river flows and cross border species movements
- Ecological restoration requires working together on many levels (community-university collaboration, government-nonprofits-business). It is a good focus for the GNEB because it can provide a serious biogeographical and ecological recommendations that are rooted in real projects
- International Boundary and Water Commission has expertise regarding those restoration efforts with a water or wetland component.
- not only benefits wildlife species but also PEOPLE - local communities
- link between healthy env and border security
- Ecological areas are not bound by political boundaries. it involves the work of groups, entities, and individual across the spectrum. benefit to the environment, but also has tangible benefits to People, communities, and economy
- GNEB has already made recommendations about border security, in two reports, and in one we wrote about border wall. We can study to death; action is needed.
- opportunity to see range of issues and become experts
- importance of creating corridors and connected lands for wildlife habitat
- Many govt agencies have "private lands" programs to support restoration on farms, ranches, etc
- Allows us to directly address ecosystem services...something not always evident in public awareness...certainly not in terms of natural systems interconnectivity.
- chance to get collaboration between agencies, this topic would be particularly helpful
- NRCS works exclusively on private lands, working in partnership with the owner (private entity, local gov't, etc) and many other federal agencies do work with a direct impact on private lands, so the recommendations will not need to be limited to federal lands
- Big Bend (Texas? Major cross border projects in SE Texas and Big Bend Area)
- Fish and Wildlife Service has a private lands program to support bird habitat restoration on ranches. Conservation and management of aquifers is a form of restoration. EDF supports habitat restoration on private lands

- Habit restoration could reduce mosquito borne diseases and also contribute to removing those waste tires.
- can prevent soil erosion which is a problem in the desert southwest
- Salton Sea is an interesting restoration project.
- opportunity to update ecosystems services from 6th report
- ecosystems services being incorporated.

Cons

- Challenge in Texas: no public lands
- Very broad, if selected, we should focus on a few issues

Expertise:

- **Keith Pezzoli:** At UC San Diego, thru partnerships in San Diego and Tijuana, we are doing ecological restoration using phytoremediation technology. Reclaiming brownfields for productive use (mixed use development, including mixed use development)
- **Edna Mendoza:** Going back to expertise: I have background on waste management issues in the border area. None on ecological restoration, but I do have contacts with a sister agency, Arizona Game & Fish.
- **David Henkel:** Expertise: I train graduate students and conduct research on community-based ecological monitoring in the interest of community action...both on public and private lands.
- **Jill Sherman-Warne:** tribes are doing some great ecological restoration projects that could be highlighted.
- **Julie Grogan-Brown:** USDA has much expertise on ecological restoration on private lands (NRCS) and public lands (Forest Service) as well as controlling invasive species (APHIS) and others.
- **Sally Spener:** IBWC has expertise in ecological restoration efforts with a water or wetland component.
- **Erin Ward:** NMSU has a number of completed and ongoing data on sources of desert wind storms and the identification of scrapped lands that might benefit from restoration while reducing PM concentrations during wind events
- **Greg Eckert:** Expertise: Hazmat site remediation, restoration of natural areas, invasive species management, soil reclamation, community involvement in restoration projects, numerous networks and contacts in restoration science and practice
- **Francisco Zamora:** Expertise: I have been involved in several restoration projects along the border
- **Ivonne Santiago:** Expertise: environmental remediation
- **Gerardo Alvidrez:** Expertise: Hazardous waste management
- **Keith Pezzoli:** expertise on ecological restoration --integrated regional watershed management perspective, linking urban agriculture, food forests, to ecological restoration
- If we need additional expertise, in past we have been able to reach out to state offices and fed agencies, local NGO, community (let them know topic of report)...If by June we need

some other entity go ahead and note, also can have expertise provide presentations on topics to participate in June meeting

Additional comments:

- we need to acknowledge the regional and local scales for environmental restoration: very local, community-specific projects and broader, watershed-scale efforts
- need to connect the restoration of ecological prog with local comm so it does not become local community vs ecological prog
- section in the 6th Report on Natural Resource Conservation: Coalitions, Multidisciplinary Approach, etc
- good to bring someone from "One Border, One Health" on the GNEB.

Additional Issues to Discuss on this Topic:

- Pollution in SW; education in this aspect needed
- Env erosion, windstorms, flooding and ecological restoration
- include air, land, water aspects
- acknowledge finer scale and re scale, might consider cases that represent coarse- and fine-grain scales
- watershed protection
- airborne erionite from road dust (dirt roads issue, US Border Patrol causing erosion and dust in roads)
- riparian restoration and water needs and sources
- socioeconomic benefits of restoration
- Border fence
- Public-private partnerships for restoration at the community level
- impact of restoration on aquifers and protection of aquifers
- use border states data on roadway accidents and deaths associated w/ wind events (may be difficult to collect, Data on "exceptional events" would be much easier)
- Water not provided under 1944 Water Treaty and impacts on environment
- public access and benefits and restoration of flows for aquatic species
- impact of wild fires along border region (NM, Little Bear Fire destroyed primary source of drinking water for Alamogordo city)

Resources:

USDA definition for ecological restoration: Restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed. Ecological restoration focuses on re-establishing the composition, structure, pattern, and ecological processes necessary to facilitate terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem sustainability, resilience, and health under current and future conditions. <http://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/>

link for the recent and wonderful USGS publication on USGS science (bio, water, energy, climate change) in the border region: <http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1380/>

US DOT has worked with other Federal agencies to encourage linking environmental planning and transportation planning at an ecosystem scale. DOT can provide information and could reach out to state DOTs on this.

U.S. - Mexico Border Environmental Health Initiative (BEHI)

<http://borderhealth.cr.usgs.gov/staticmaplib.html>